

MGA TIMES



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MAIZE TRAINING DAYS

A key feature of this mailing is the enclosure of an invitation to the two final Maize training days of this spring. The two December training days were oversubscribed, with a healthy mix of grower and supply trade in attendance. Do not delay in booking your place as both venues have limited numbers, with the Reading site being particularly restricted. Please ring the office or email to book your place so we know numbers to cater for.

In This Issue

- ◆ Conference Invite.
- ◆ Nitrogen predictor form.
- ◆ Training days invite.
- ◆ Variety Choice—Simon Draper.
- ◆ Nitrogen predictor explained—John Morgan.

MGA CONFERENCE

Please don't forget to book yourself a place at this years Annual Maize Conference. We already have over ninety delegates booked in, so there is still room for more.

The conference is once again kindly being sponsored by Bayer CropSciences. Subjects to be discussed by leading industry specialists include:

- What kind of maize do I want for my cows/digester.
- Disease and pest threats to the maize crop - Foliar disease and Corn Borer.
- Variety guidance for biogas and maize grown under plastic.
- The agronomic benefits of maize and hybrid rye within an arable rotation - Blackgrass control.
- Latest Danish research results focusing on undersowing.
- A review of the MGA trials conducted in 2014.

The conference is open to all maize growers, with MGA members getting a discount on their ticket price. An Invitation is included in this mailing.



APOLOGY

In the 2015 MGA Variety booklet there are a few mistakes. Es Remington and Sunshinos are both Grainseed varieties. The website address for DuPont Pioneer is also incorrect, it should read www.pioneer.com/uk And the title should be Dupont Pioneer, not Pioneer DE. We apologise to these two companies for any confusion that may have arisen. (Will try harder to get it all correct next year!)

CROSS COMPLIANCE SOIL RULES

The replacement of the Single Payment Scheme (SPS) with the Basic Payment Scheme) has brought about, amongst other things, significant changes to the Cross Compliance rules for soil management. The green Soil Protection Review booklet has been replaced by three "outcome" based rules focused on:

- Providing minimum soil cover (GAEC 4)
- Minimising soil erosion (GAEC 5)
- Maintaining the level of soil organic matter in soil (GAEC 6)

GAEC 5 is the one causing most concern in maize growing circles as in effect it says that farmers causing significant soil erosion, if inspected, will come unstuck. Something for a future technical note however those making variety decisions now should take very seriously the need to get maize cleared when soils can take harvest machinery and post harvest cultivation or cover crop establishment is still possible. Remember the MGA's view is that no maize stubble should be left unmanaged over the winter months.

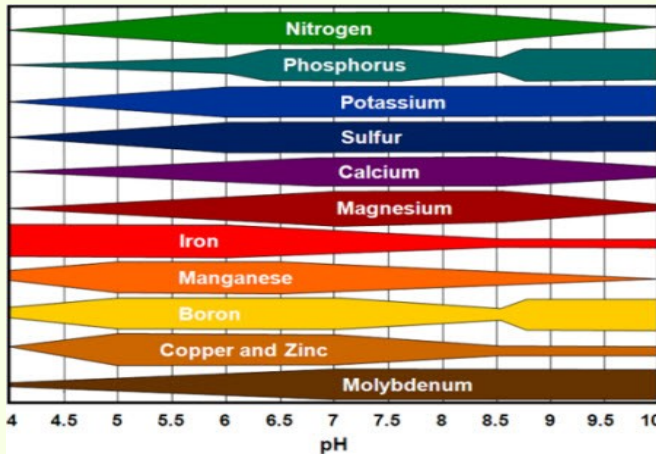
REGISTER FOR BASIC PAYMENT SCHEME NOW

Registration is now open for farmers keen to claim payment via the Basis Payment Scheme. Our experience is that phoning the RPA to get up and running is easier than via the web. Whichever route you choose get going sooner, rather than later to keep ahead of the game.

CHECK SOIL pH NOW

It is a well established fact that crop nutrient availability, be it in the form of organic nutrients or those from a bag, is seriously affected if soil pH's are allowed to drop or increase above the accepted target for a particular crop. Soils should be sampled now if not already done, and lime applied to meet any recommendations. Soils for maize should have pH's between 6 & 7. Consider the type of lime carefully if a rapid increase in soil pH is needed. As a general rule, the finer the material (assuming neutralising values are similar) the quicker it will influence soil pH.

Relative availability of nutrient at different levels of soil pH



(Pioneer Web site)

TESTING OF DUNG AND SLURRY

Organic manures such as slurry, FYM and digestate contain significant volumes of crop nutrients, which if fully accounted for can reduce the need for and as a consequence lower the cost of inorganic fertiliser per tonne of maize produced. John's technical note focusing on the MGA Nitrogen Predictor highlights some of the handy tools available to encourage the better use of organic manure nutrients. The software tools use average values for organic manures, which while better than a guess, clearly do not take account of the actual nutrient applied to your maize from your manure. To fill this knowledge gap you should get organic manures analysed, either via a reputable lab or via the on farm analysis kits that are available. Whether you use a lab or an on farm kit, it is vital that a representative sample is used. Such a sample is best collected from the field, either via buckets placed in the field (pre spreading) for slurry and digestate, or with the aid of a dung fork and a bucket for FYM. Take lots of sub samples, mix the sub samples together and take your sample for analysis. The results generated can be used in manual fertiliser planning, or can be entered into nutrient management software to replace the standards.



Agros on farm Nitrogen meter, including hydrometer to estimate Phosphate and Potash levels.

GREEN FORAGE MOBILE NIR MACHINE AVAILABLE AT CONFERENCE

Via this mailing we are delighted to welcome the newest commercial member to the MGA. "Green Forage" market a range of portable and machine mounted NIR analysers, which if all is to be believed could make multiple, accurate, quick and on site analysis of fresh and silage maize an on farm reality. Those keen to learn more and see/try out the machines for yourselves should bring a maize sample to the conference where Green Forage will have a portable NIR machine on their stand.

NITROGEN PREDICTOR

John Morgan's article on the MGA N predictor in this mailing provides a timely reminder of how important it is to get the fertiliser and in particular, yield influencing, nitrogen levels right for your crop. The Nitrogen Predictor continues to be used by growers across the UK. Mark Osman, Farms Manager for the Royal Farms at Windsor, is a convert, having used the system for over ten years. Mark regularly requests Nitrogen recommendations for all of the Estates maize fields and continues to be pleased with the yield and quality of the resultant maize crops. Members keen to learn more about or use the N Predictor service should contact the office and or fill in and return the enclosed input form.



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